

Application No. 09/993,531
Response to Office Action of September 14, 2005

REMARKS

Introduction

Applicant and his attorney thank the Examiner for the interview on December 6, 2005. Applicant and the Examiner discussed all the pending claims. It was agreed that amendment of the claims as provided herein "would allow the claims to overcome the immediate prior art. This art includes United States Patent No. 6,213,905 to White et al., United States Patent No. 6,155,943 to Ledvina et al., "the admitted prior art" described in the specification, as well as United States Patent No. 4,526,558 to Durham, and United States Patent No. 5,876,295 to Young.

At the interview and as is reflected in the interview summary, the Examiner suggested that the phrase "the pattern continually repeats itself along the periphery of the sprocket" be inserted into the claims. What is not reflected in the interview summary, is that the Examiner agreed that the word "repeat" means that the event happens more than once or at least two times. Moreover, what is not reflected in the current interview summary is that the Examiner indicated that the word "sequence" also was appropriate for the claims as an alternative to the word "pattern." Applicant also suggested at the interview that at least for some of the claims the sequence could be described as repeating itself continually and uninterrupted. Applicant has tried to incorporate the discussion at the interview into the claims of this amendment. Hence, with this amendment, claims 1, 2, 10-12, 15, 17, 20, 29-31, 33, 37, 40-45 and 48-51 have been amended. Claims 1, 10, 20, 29, 33, 40, 45, 49, 50 and 51 are the pending independent claims. Claims 4, 26, and 47 have been cancelled. In total, claims 1-3 5, 9-13, 15, 17, 20-26, 29-31, 33-53 are pending.

At the interview, Applicant explained to the current Examiner that the prior

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Examiner at the June 2005 interview found the then pending claims (prior to this amendment) sufficient to distinguish them over the prior art of record. Indeed, Applicant explained to the current Examiner that the prior Examiner was in actuality ready to allow the claims. At the June 2005 interview, the prior Examiner offered to say agreement was reached, but Applicant indicated that if the Examiner felt better not "checking the agreement reached box" on the interview summary that would be ok too. Applicant told the current Examiner that after being told Applicant would hear from the prior Examiner within a few weeks, nothing happened until Applicant determined that the prior Examiner had left the employ of the Patent Office. The current Examiner expressed confusion at the December interview of what happened at the June 2005 interview because the interview summary for that interview was never filed or lost. Applicant, however, has found his copy of the interview summary describing the interview of June 22, 2005. The latter summary is attached it to this amendment.

The Office Action Of May 10, 2005

As discussed at the December 6, 2005 interview, the prior Examiner stated claims 9, 19, and 30 defined patentable subject matter in his office action of May 10, 2005. Thereafter, Applicant concluded that among the various features which led the prior Examiner to find that claims 9, 19 and 30 were patentably distinguished over the prior art, the reduction of tension on a chain through repeating patterns of differing root radii or pitch radii had relevance. This was confirmed at the interview of June 22, 2005. Hence, the claims of the amendment filed June 24, 2005.

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The 102/103 Rejection Of September 14, 2005 Based Upon The '905 to White

Not knowing what happened at the June 2005 interview, in his office action of September 2005, the current Examiner rejected all of the claims based upon USP 6,213,905 to White, but indicated he wanted to be informed as to what happened at the June 2005 interview. See paragraph page 5, paragraph 10 of the Office Action of September 14, 2005.

At the December 2005 interview, Applicant explained that noise reduction sprockets such as the ones described as prior art in the specification and the patent '943 to Ledvina et al. increase chain tensions, not reduce them. Moreover, Applicant indicated that White was no better as a reference than Ledvina. As discussed at the interview, White is a noise reduction system that uses two Ledvina type sprockets on one chain. But noise reduction Ledvina sprockets INCREASE TENSIONS.

White differs from the pending claims for at least the following reasons.

1. White minimizes the increase in tension which is inherent in noise reduction sprockets. White does not decrease tensions relative to a straight sprocket.
2. White does not decrease tensions from external sources.
3. White does not have radii in a pattern which continually repeats or continually repeats in an uninterrupted way.
4. White does not have a pattern of three or more radii that continually repeats or continually repeats in an uninterrupted way at least three times.

At the December 2005 interview, the examiner saw the claims as proposed herein as distinguishing over the known prior art for at least the four reasons set forth above.

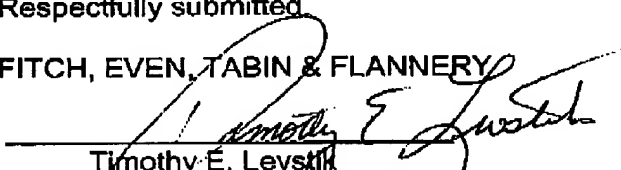
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Conclusion

All of the claims now describe a sprocket and in some cases an automotive drive or timing system with different root radii or pitch radii in repeating patterns or sequences which reduce maximum tensions as claimed. Further, the Examiner agreed to call the undersigned to discuss any potential allowable subject matter before rendering any further office action rejecting the claims. For the reasons set forth above, Applicant submits that pending claims are in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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